

NORTH CAROLINA SENIOR TAR HEEL LEGISLATURE 2009 FACT SHEET

SUPPORT FOR SENIOR CENTERS

The Senior Tar Heel Legislature requests an increase in funding for senior centers by an additional \$2,000,000 in recurring funds for a total of \$3,265,316 a year.

Senior centers are focal points in their communities and provide a wide array of programs and services. There are an essential link to other community programs and benefits that contribute to the physical, mental, and economic wellbeing of older adults and support their efforts to remain independent in their communities. Senior centers may be the only place in the community where seniors can access important services such as nutrition programs, transportation and legal assistance. The services and programs that senior centers do provide are essential to keeping seniors healthy, engaged and independent in the community.

In the past several years the State's funding to senior centers has remained level, with the last recurring increase being given in FY 04-05. Senior centers continue to struggle financially to meet the rising costs of operations-maintaining staffing positions, keeping satellite locations open, maintaining facilities and equipment, and providing programs and services to meet the needs of the current seniors in the community as well as the future influx of baby boomers.

Currently there are 164 senior centers in North Carolina that are either operational or under development in 98 counties in the state. Two counties without a senior center in existence or under development are: Gates and Hoke.

Current Funding to Senior Centers

Currently there are three funding streams for senior centers through the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS). These are as follows:

Senior Center Operations is an allowable service through the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) and is funded at the discretion of counties. The number of centers funded for operations reflect those with full time programs and the capacity to meet DAAS Senior Center Operations service standards.

Senior Center Outreach funding is provided to develop new services and to expand existing services in senior centers for the purpose of reaching unserved and underserved elderly through a statewide outreach of services.

Senior Center General Purpose funding provides existing senior centers and developing senior centers with funding for any purpose that supports operations or development. Expenditures include equipment purchases/repairs, building maintenance, supplies, administrative costs, activities and construction.

The additional \$2,000,000 in recurring funds would be added to the existing General Purpose funding and would be allocated based on a share formula. Noncertified senior centers receive one share, Centers of Merit receive two shares and Centers of Excellence receive three shares.

General Purpose funding provides an incentive for centers to obtain certification and forty percent of the state's centers are currently certified. On average, certified centers offer more services than noncertified centers. Certified centers report significantly more classes and activities for the centers' participants in both regularly scheduled activities and special events. Thus, certification results in significant, positive changes and ensures that senior center programming maintains high standards. To maintain and ensure these outcomes, funding needs to be available.

Many senior centers are struggling financially as operating costs rise and budgets shrink. This will be compounded as centers try to position themselves to meet the needs of the baby boomers in their communities. The availability of additional funding for certified centers does provide an incentive for senior centers to become certified. However, as additional senior centers become certified, without an increase in state appropriations, the level of funding for certified centers will probably decrease.